

CHRIST'S PAST AND PRESENT WITNESSES

NO. 2709

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”
John 15:27

OUR Lord Jesus Christ ought to be believed upon His own unsupported word, first, because of the divinity of His nature. God cannot lie and that Christ is God is abundantly proved by His miracles. He did that which none but God could do. He ought also to be believed because of the perfection of His character, for even the enemies of the Gospel have been obliged to confess that the perfection of the character of Jesus is altogether undeniable. They have critically examined it, but they have not been able to find a single fault or flaw in it.

They have thrust the character of Christ into a furnace such as that in which men try silver—and they have heated the furnace seven times hotter than usual—yet has the character of Christ come forth unhurt from every trial. A perfect man ought to be believed when He speaks. The perfection of His character proves Him to be worthy of confidence.

Put together, then, the Godhead and the perfect manhood of Christ, and I am not too bold when I say that He deserves to be believed upon His bare word without any further witness. Yet such is the natural infidelity of the human heart with regard to anything that comes from God—so resolutely do men shut their eyes against the light lest they should be reproved by it—that our Lord Jesus Christ has not left Himself without witnesses.

The first and chief Witness to Christ is the Holy Spirit. Read again the verse preceding our text, upon which I have already commented—“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” The Holy Spirit is still here on earth, working spiritual miracles in the hearts of men, and those works of His are the attestation and seal of the mission of Christ, that He is indeed the Savior of men.

“There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The water and the blood are two things about which we ourselves become witnesses, as I shall show you directly, but the point I want you to notice just now is that, as it was with the apostles, so is it in a measure with ourselves, for we are called, as they were, to the most honorable office conceivable, seeing that we are called to do what the Holy Spirit Himself deigns to do, that is, to witness to Christ, for, after He had spoken of the testimony of the Spirit of truth, He added, “And ye also shall bear witness.”

We are to be laborers together with the Holy Spirit. We are to stand, as it were, in the witness-box with Him, and bear similar testimony to that which He bears concerning Christ—“He shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness.” Oh, what an honorable position we are to occupy! What a grand work we are to do—a work which an angel might envy us, for we are to be witnesses, together with the Holy Spirit, concerning Christ.

In handling this text, I shall have, first of all, to remark that *the apostles were witnesses to the facts of Christ's life*. He said to them, “Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” Then I shall have to show you that *believers now are witnesses to the results of Christ's Gospel*. We have not been with Him from the beginning and therefore our witness is not concerning the

facts of His life—but we can testify to the results of His Gospel. When I have spoken upon those two themes, I shall close by noticing the *object of both these forms of testimony*—the apostles' witness to the facts of Christ's life and the believers' witness to the results of those facts.

I. First, then, the apostles were stated by Christ to be WITNESSES TO THE FACTS OF HIS LIFE, from the time when they became His disciples, right down to the day when He was taken up into heaven.

You know, dear friends, how any historical fact comes to be accepted as a fact. It is by the weight of the evidence by which it is supported. If Tacitus, for instance, makes a statement in his history, as a rule we believe what he says because he is known to be a veracious historian. But Tacitus is certainly not more reliable than is Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or John, because Tacitus never died for the defense of any statement that he made. But those who bore witness concerning Christ, and were His historians, were ready to die and did die rather than deny anything that they had said concerning their Lord and Master.

When we find discrepancies in the writings of historians, we examine and weigh the evidence as to any contradictions, so as to see which is the correct record of the facts in question. If anyone made a statement that such and such a thing happened yesterday, and you wanted to ascertain if the statement were true, you would call witnesses who saw it.

Suppose you could not get those witnesses for a month—their testimony would be just as good in a month's time as it is today. Suppose you could not get them together for fifty years—their evidence would be just as valid. Or if they had written their testimony, and had it duly attested, what they had written would be just as good evidence fifty years hence as it would be today, and if true at all, it would stand true—ay, as true as the testimony of these witnesses stands though eighteen hundred years and more have elapsed since they bore their witness. We have, concerning the life of Christ, the testimony of those who were with Him from the beginning—and their testimony is good, because it complies with certain rules which usually apply to reliable evidence.

The first rule is, when witness is borne to any fact, that *the witnesses must be sufficiently numerous*. There were eleven true apostles, and eleven good men are quite enough to testify to any fact known to them. There were others besides the apostles who were with Christ from the beginning, and in the mouth of any two of these good honest witnesses a fact might be established, so that, in the mouth of the eleven, the truth remains beyond all doubt.

Further, *the eleven apostles had actual sight of the things to which they bore witness*. You remember that John says, concerning the blood and the water which flowed from Christ's side when the soldier pierced it with a spear, "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true."

And the same might have been said of all the facts which John records in his Gospel, for he was an eyewitness of them—and so was Matthew. He was on the spot and what he wrote was not hearsay, but what he saw with his eyes, and his ears had heard, and his hands had handled. Well, now, eleven witnesses, who have actually seen a certain thing, would be a sufficient number to prevent mistakes. And as I have already reminded you, there were many more than eleven witnesses on many occasions, especially the witnesses to our Lord's resurrection, for there were over five hundred brethren at once, and it was not possible that such a large company as that should have been deceived.

Again, these *witnesses bore their testimony at or near the time when the events happened*, for the apostles came forward and spoke concerning Christ, and His holy, useful, and miraculous life, and His wondrous death and resurrection, just after the events had occurred. They only waited a little while, according to their Lord's instructions, and then they stood up in the midst of Jerusalem—Peter, who had been with Christ from the beginning, and the other apostles, bearing witness that these things were even so.

Had they been liars and false witnesses, they would have been put to confusion, and would have been unable again to open their mouths. But as they said, these things were not done in a corner, they were common town talk and admitted by everybody to be facts.

Moreover, in order especially to establish historical facts, *the witnesses must bear testimony on the spot*—and these eleven men did not go off to Rome and there begin to publish that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He wrought miracles, and that He rose from the dead. They did go to Rome and everywhere else ultimately, but they began at Jerusalem where they would have been contradicted if men could contradict them anywhere.

But so fully was their witness known to be true that, the very first time they stood up to bear their testimony, though they were unlearned and ignorant men, there were three thousand persons who became the disciples of their slain Master simply through their witness as blessed by the Holy Spirit.

I do not know whether you are prepared to doubt their testimony, but I am not. I am resolved to believe that what they spoke was true and the more so because *they spoke very plainly*. When a man wants to take you in, he often speaks in a roundabout fashion. He guards his statements and puts them in such a way that he can afterwards say, “Ah! you did not quite understand me, you made a mistake in thinking that was what I meant.”

But when the people who listened to Peter and John, saw their boldness, and heard the plain manner in which they gave their testimony, they knew that the apostles were speaking of the things which they had themselves witnessed. There was no misunderstanding their language—they were plain, honest, simple-minded, straightforward witnesses to Christ, who gave their testimony with great plainness of speech.

Besides, *they all agreed in their testimony*. True, when we read the four Gospels, we notice that they contain just those little differences which prove the men to have been honest, for, if you set four men to tell a story, they will all tell it differently even though each one of them speaks the truth, for each of them will look at the matter from a different standpoint.

If all four of them spoke in exactly the same words and there were no apparent discrepancies between them, you would know that they had laid their heads together and concocted the tale in order to deceive their hearers. A judge in court would soon find them out and he would say, “That is a trumped-up story, so they none of them go an inch beyond the other for fear they should contradict one another, and so be found out.” But the four evangelists differ in their statements only as honest men must of necessity differ if they are independent witnesses—and their agreement in the facts to which they testify helps to confirm their witness—and to make assurance doubly sure.

Best of all, remember that *these men had nothing to gain by their witness concerning Christ*. They left all and followed Him. Instead of gaining by their testimony, they were losers of their property, they were losers of their reputation, they were losers of their comforts, they were losers even of their lives. They were so certain that what they had seen was really true that, rather than deny it, “they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.”

Yet not one of the eleven ever drew back and denied the truth of the testimony that he had given. And even the twelfth, who was a traitor, confessed that he had taken blood money for the betrayal of his innocent Master. In committing suicide, he gave such witness as “the son of perdition” could that, after all, the Bible was true. His testimony did not, in the least, invalidate the witness of the eleven apostles.

Now, my dear friends, it is upon the evidence of these witnesses that the Gospel first commenced to win belief among the sons of men. True, the Spirit of God witnessed to the truth of that Gospel, but as far as human instrumentality was concerned, the apostles were also witnesses and they were good and sufficient witnesses. Nobody ought to ask for any better ones—and if anyone will not believe them, it may be truly said, “Neither would he believe though one rose from the dead.”

II. Having spoken of the apostolic witnesses to the facts of Christ's life, I am now to speak of THE PRESENT WITNESSES TO THE RESULTS OF HIS GOSPEL.

We, who were not with Christ from the beginning, cannot bear our personal testimony to the facts of His life. We neither saw Him in Bethlehem's manger, nor on Calvary's cross, nor in Joseph's tomb, nor as He ascended into glory from the Mount of Olives, so we cannot testify to those facts as the apostles could.

But we can bear witness to some other things. We can testify to the results of the Gospel as we have realized them in ourselves. And here we are something better even than eyewitnesses, for we feel as well as see the things concerning which we testify. I want, my dear brothers and sisters, to put very briefly before you some things about which you are to bear witness of Christ.

Read the text again, with the exception of the last three words—"Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me"—and learn from it that you cannot witness for Christ unless you have been with Him. You must have had spiritual dealings with the Lord Jesus Christ and felt the power of His spiritual presence upon you, or else you cannot be such a witness as our text describes. But if you have been with Him, you can testify of Him.

The first thing to which some of us can bear witness is *the peace-giving power of His precious blood*. We were once thoroughly convinced that we had broken the law of God and we were under a dreadful apprehension that God, the Just One, would punish us for this sin. We sought all sorts of ways to find comfort, but we never found any. We tried every nostrum of the wise men of the day, but they all failed us altogether.

But the very first time that, by faith, we saw Jesus hanging on the cross, and knew that by His sacrifice, He had made atonement for our sin—I say that, the very moment we put our trust in Him, our conscience found a wonderful peace and rest. Was it not so with you, beloved? You were, by faith, with Jesus as you saw Him hanging upon the accursed tree as your Substitute and Surety. Did you not then, by the grace of God, find immediate relief from the terrible burden of sin, which threatened to crush you to the earth? Well, now that you have thus been with Him, you can bear witness to that fact, can you not?

I know that my witness about it did not need to be told with my lips, for I had not long been in the house, that morning when I found the Savior, before one who had been anxious about me, said, "There is a change come over my son." And a delicate question was put, which soon drew out of me the confession that I had looked to Christ and that I was lightened.

Why, they could all see in my face the evidence of the change that had been wrought—there was all the difference between bondage and liberty, or between despair and delight—and it was because I had been with Christ that I had, in a moment, leaped out of nature's darkness into His marvelous light.

So, now, whenever anybody says to me, "Your view of the atonement, you know, is very old-fashioned—the doctrine of substitution is quite out of date"—I am not at all shaken in my belief. The gentlemen of the modern-thought school, who have been to Germany for their theology, do not like that glorious doctrine of substitution.

They think that the atonement is a something or other, that in some way or other, somehow or other, has something or other to do with the salvation of men—but I tell them that their cloudy Gospel might have surrounded me till my hair grew grey, but I would never have been any the better for it. I would never have found peace with God, nor come to love the Lord at all, if it had not been that I distinctly saw that He, who knew no sin, was made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

When I realized that, although I had gone astray from God and broken His righteous law, He had laid on Christ my iniquity and punished Him in my stead, my soul found rest at once. And to this day, it cannot rest under any other explanation of the atonement of Christ. So I bear my own personal witness, and many of you can heartily join with me in bearing similar testimony. You have been with Christ, so you can speak of the power of His substitutionary sacrifice as begetting peace in your soul.

Next, we can bear witness to another thing. As soon as we believed in Jesus Christ, *we found ourselves strangely altered*. Perhaps we had formerly had a merely moral struggle against sin—that was quite proper as far as it went, yet we never succeeded in that struggle. I have known many persons who

were accustomed to give way to passion, and who never could curb their temper, but when they believed in Jesus, to their surprise they found that the lion was changed into a lamb.

I have known men who had fallen into the habit of using profane language and who could not break away from the evil even when they became aware of the wrong of it—but when they have, by faith, looked to Jesus, and so have been saved—they have never had a temptation to use an oath again. All inclination to that sin seems to have gone clean away from them.

Many a time have I seen a drunkard, who has signed the pledge—a very good thing to do—but it has not been any use in his case, for he has not kept it. Yet have I known him, when he has been converted to Christ, keep that pledge and a great deal more—he has gone beyond abstinence from strong drink—and has had multitudes of virtues. There are many persons, here present, who do not need to tell people that believing in Christ has wrought a complete change in them, because anybody who is acquainted with them can see it.

One man's wife knows all about that change. She had a black eye last year, but she never gets one now. She is as happy as the birds in the air with that husband of hers who has given up going to the public house, and who is now found walking in the ways of God. There is a mother who said to me, "I know that my boy is converted, sir. Oh, what a trouble he had been to me! What a rebellious, disobedient child he was. But now, though he is only a little boy, he makes a conscience of obeying his mother and he tries to make everybody happy."

This is witness-bearing, and this is what our Lord Jesus Christ meant you who have been with Him, and have learned of Him, to do. His transforming hand has touched you, and changed you—and you can bear witness of that fact. Why, if all the unbelievers in the world were to say to some people whom I know, "The grace of God has made no difference in you," they would be obliged to laugh with a holy laughter like that of Abraham, they could not help it, for the grace of God has so completely changed them that, if hell were made into heaven, the difference would not be much greater than is the change from what they were to what they now are. Well, this is good witness. I pray God that many of you may be able to bear it.

There is a third witness which many of us can also bear. When we get near to Christ in holy fellowship and commune much with Him in private prayer, we find that our love for good things becomes very strong, our zeal for God's cause is intensified, and moreover, *our love to all mankind is increased*.

We find ourselves willing to forgive our adversaries and we are anxious in every way to prove the reality of our love to God. But if we get away from Christ, we do not take much interest in holy things. Our chief concern then consists in making as much money as we can, or in enjoying as much so-called pleasure as we can.

If any of you, brethren, try the modern theology, you will soon see whether it will do your soul any good. I have known some who have tried it and I have noticed the change in their life and conversation—no spirituality, no love to God, and no care about the best things. They talk about political religion, but there is very little of vital godliness that is ever spoken of by them.

But if you get near to Christ and learn the power of His precious blood, and dwell in Him, and live upon Him, you will then see whether it does not sanctify you. I am sure you must all bear witness, you who live farthest away from Christ, that you are worse men and worse women when you wander away from Him, and that the nearer you get to Him, and the more He occupies your thoughts, the more swiftly is your evil temper overcome, and your whole heart filled with love to God and love to men. I know it is so.

And that is another witness to the truth of the Gospel, for that which promotes holiness cannot be itself a lie. I lay it down as an axiom that whatever makes men holy must be true, because truth and right are in the same line of things. That which creates evil is itself a falsehood, and that which creates holiness is and must be true.

Another thing to which we can bear witness is, *the renewing power of God's grace*. Whenever we grow dull with regard to eternal things, and careless concerning our own souls, we find, I think, that getting near to Christ again, coming back to the cross, plunging afresh in the—

*“Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,”—*

sitting at His feet again, eating His flesh and drinking His blood again—all this wonderfully refreshes us.

There is a fable concerning a bath, of which it was said that if old men washed therein, it took the furrows from their brows and made them young again. But certainly, when we dwell in Christ, He takes away the decrepitude of our declining grace and we grow vigorous once more. We renew our youth, like the eagle's, when our mouth is satisfied with the good things of Christ.

Have you not found it to be so, you who had grown dull and cold? Have you not been refreshed and revived by coming back to Him? The very genius of the Christian religion is enthusiasm, but the enthusiasm is created by contact with Christ. As we come near to our great Captain, every soldier in the ranks of the King's army feels that he must be a hero. We look at His scars and wounds, and see what He did and suffered, and then we feel that it would be mean and contemptible on our part to be otherwise than altogether in earnest for so great and good a Lord, and for so grand a cause.

I think that many of you must also have noticed—and if so, you can bear witness to it—*the comforting power of the presence of Christ with you*. All of you who know the Lord have had troubles of different kinds to carry to the Lord in prayer. I will suppose that you, my friend, have lost a good deal of money in business, and that you have fretted and worried a great deal over it.

If it has been so with you, I will tell you when you worried over your loss—it was before you took the matter to the Lord in prayer. But after you had spread the whole case before Him, it is wonderful how different it looked. The circumstances seemed quite changed and you took up the cross, and you found it very light compared with what it had been before.

Perhaps some of you know what it is to be teased and perplexed by unreasonable and wicked men, and you have been apt to get very snappish under their attacks. If that is what has happened to you, my brother, I know when it was—it was when you had not been with Jesus and tried to meet the trouble by yourself. But after you have had a few minutes of private prayer, you have come down into the arena and you have seemed to say, “I am ready for you now. You may do what you like, for I am calm and quiet, and I can bear it all, for I have been with Jesus, and He has given me strength according to my day.”

If you have been slandered and persecuted for righteousness' sake, and have had your heart wounded by some cruel stab, you have been restored by getting near to Christ, and you have been able to sing,—

*“If on my face for Thy dear name,
Shame and reproaches be,
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If Thou remember me.”*

On the bed of sickness, or by the grave where your loved ones are buried, your heart has been sustained and comforted if you have been with Jesus. Yes, that witness is true, and tens of thousands can confirm it, that there is no sustaining power in anything else that is worthy to be compared with the sustaining energy of communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have ever felt its gracious influence must know that this is the truth, for Christ's presence most wondrously bears their spirit up when everything else gives way.

One of the evidences of the truth of the Gospel which, perhaps, strikes onlookers more than any other, is *the serenity with which the presence of Christ endows His people when they come to die*. Their

end is often very peaceful and very beautiful. There died, last week, not far from here, a young man whose brother, as he watched him, saw tokens of such wonderful happiness in him that he said to him, "Brother, what can I do to be as happy as you are?" The dying man's answer was, "It is all in Number 1,500. It is all in Number 1,500."

You know that sermon of mine about the brazen serpent? [#1500—"Lifting Up the Brazen Serpent"] The young man said to his brother, "It is all in Number 1,500. It is Jesus only, Jesus only. Look to Jesus, look and live. It is all there." His brother said that he could not tell exactly when he passed away, so sweet was the serenity that the presence of the Master gave him.

I could take you to the Stockwell Orphanage, to the bedside of a little boy who may be in heaven by now, but when I saw him on Monday, he said to me, "I shall soon die, Mr. Spurgeon. And when I think I am going, as I sometimes do at night, I clap my hands at the thought that I shall so soon be with Jesus." Poor little fellow, he could hardly lift those thin hands of his, yet he clapped them with delight at the thought that he should so soon be with Jesus!

It would have done you good if you could have seen him, and so it would if you could have seen our dear sister, Mrs. White, the wife of our beloved elder, when she knew that she had a cancer which would soon take her home. The look of her face is with me now. I sat by her bedside and it was more than a sermon to me—it made me feel willing to die at any time when I saw the calm serenity with which that suffering saint looked forward to her departure. She did not regard death as a thing to be spoken of as a dreadful and terrible matter, but she calmly spoke of being with Christ, which was far better than being with the dearest friends on earth.

This holy serenity has often convinced ungodly men of the truth of the Gospel—and though you and I cannot at present bear that witness, yet very likely we shall do so in due season and already, so many thousands of saints have borne this witness to the power of faith in Christ that it ought to be regarded, and a deaf ear ought not to be turned to it.

Look at the thousands of martyrs who have calmly stood at the stake and been burned to death for Christ's sake, and yet have cried, "None but Jesus! None but Jesus!" and faithful to the end, have gone up in a chariot of fire to be "forever with the Lord." What but the Gospel of Christ could string them up to such wondrous courage and press their spirits into such a sacred equanimity that even death itself was despised by them, so that they cried, with the apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" In all these points, ye also, who love the Lord, are to be witnesses for Christ.

I had many other things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. Therefore, let me sum up all by saying—beloved brothers and sisters, members of this church, and members of the one church of Jesus Christ, be good witnesses for your Lord, remembering that you are standing up with the Holy Ghost to testify concerning Him. Oh, be such witnesses that none need be ashamed of you!

Remember that *witness must be personal, not hearsay*. A good woman in the witness-box begins, "She said," said she, but the judge stops her, and says, "We do not want to know what she said, what did you yourself see?" So, dear friends, it is no use for you to try to bear testimony to the world about a thing you never saw and never felt. Personal godliness must be at the bottom of all evidence concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If a man has no faith, let him not talk about faith. If he has never known the Lord, let him hold his tongue till he does know Him, for it must be personal witness that must be borne if it is to be of any value.

Further, *it must be real, not fancied*. The judge would at once stop a witness if he said, "My lord, I thought," and he would say, "We do not want your thoughts, my dear sir. What did you see?" In like manner, we want to know what you have felt about Christ, not what you have fancied concerning Him. What has been really true in your spiritual life? What has been proved to be true by your actions?

Next, *good witness must be consistent, not contradictory*, for, when a witness contradicts himself, his evidence is not regarded as of any value. So, if you say, "The Gospel makes me holy," but you are caught in an act of cheating, or you lose your temper, or your talk is not clean, men will say, "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing, but which are we to believe?"

And once more, *good testimony must be persistent, not variable*, for, if a man says one thing now, and another thing another time, you naturally say, "We never know where to find that fellow." That is the case with far too many professors—we do not know where to find them. On a Sunday, they are careful to carry a Bible and a hymn-book, but I have heard that, on a week day, they are more likely to have a pack of cards in their hand.

On Sunday, it is, "Sing a hymn to Jesus." But on Monday, it is, "Sing to anybody you like." On Sunday, it is, "Fear God." But on Monday, if it were not for the fear of the policeman, nobody knows what they might attempt. This will not do. If you are not consistent throughout your whole lives—if you are not all of one piece—I could almost wish that you were all the bad piece, because this mixture, this mingle-mangle, this Baal and JEHOVAH, this partly for God and partly for Mammon—this is the great mischief-making thing in the professing church today. Oh, that God would give us the grace to bear persistent, consistent, unvarying witness to the power of the Gospel on our souls and in our lives!

To anyone who does not believe the Gospel, I have this word to say. My friend, you have come in here tonight and yet you are not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Is the Gospel true? Probably you reply, "Yes, I believe it is true." Well, then, if it be true, why do you not believe it? If Jesus Christ is true, why do you not believe Him?

The Gospel tells you about your souls, about eternity, about heaven, about hell, about the only way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, if it be true, why do you not believe it? Why do you not see to it that your soul is right with God through believing in Jesus Christ? I would like to bring you to a point so that you would say of the Gospel, "I believe it," or "I reject it."

Suppose you should reject it? Then you practically say that the apostles were liars—that they bore testimony to a set of falsehoods. More than that, you are prepared to say that all the myriads of martyrs who died for the truth were fools, for they died in the defense of a fiction—that they went to prison and lost all things, and suffered every kind of ill treatment and torture for the sake of this Gospel—yet you say that they were fools, all of them, and that you are the one wise man who knows more than all of them.

Well, we have only your word for that, and we are not as sure about it as you seem to be. Further, you are prepared to say that all of us who declare that belief in Christ gave us peace of conscience, changed our lives, comforts our hearts and supports us in sickness—you say that we are all under a delusion.

And your mother, when she died sweetly rejoicing in Christ—was she deluded, too? And the little child who died singing of Jesus, and who bade her father follow her to heaven, was she also deceived? Were these wrong? Were all these mistaken? And those of whom I have spoken, whom I have myself seen within this last week, of whose calmness and serenity on their deathbeds I have testified to you—was that all a delusion? I should like you to say that to the little boy at the Orphanage, only I do not think that you would have the heart to do it. And if you did, it would not make any difference to him because he knows better.

If you were to tell me, when I eat my dinner, that I am not nourished by it, and that I do not enjoy it—that it is only just an idea and a fancy—well, you know, I should not argue with you—I should laugh at you. And I often feel inclined to laugh at unbelievers—only I remember how much they are losing, and in what danger they stand—so my laughter turns to tears.

Oh, that you would believe the Gospel! It makes me happy, it makes me blessed. I cannot live without it and I dare not die without it. And blessed be God, I will not try either experiment, to live without it or to die without it. No, I can still say,—

*"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
His flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die;"—*

for I know that it is true. I have been with Jesus and therefore I bear witness to Him. Go and do likewise, only do it much better than I have done it, all you who have been with Him, and God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 15:12-27

Verse 12. *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

O beloved, do keep this commandment! Overlook each other's infirmities. Bear with each other's faults. Love one another as Christ has loved us.

13-15. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

"I have explained Myself to you in such a way that I have proved that you are My friends. A master sets his servant to work without explaining what his object is in that work, but I have explained to you what My Father's design is. Therefore, you are My friends."

16-21. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

We cannot expect, therefore, to receive honor and to wear a crown of gold where Jesus wore a crown of thorns.

22-24. *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

They would have been comparatively free from sin.

24-26. *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

Notice that blessed truth—that even that divine person, the Holy Ghost, when He comes to visit us, has nothing better to speak of than our Lord Jesus Christ. "He shall testify of me." Even the Holy Spirit, when He exercises the function of the Comforter, testifies of Christ. Is He not the consolation of Israel? Well did the poet write—

*"Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
We love to hear of Thee;
No music's like Thy charming name,
Nor half so sweet can be."*

27. *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—660, 980, 809

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